

SENATE BILL 3927

By Johnson

AN ACT to name a state bridge in Williamson County in honor of the late Lance Corporal Richard A. Buerstetta, United States Marine Corps.

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly have seen fit to name certain highways and bridges to honor the memory of those courageous members of the United States Armed Forces who gave their lives in the defense of our nation; and

WHEREAS, no person is more deserving of this honor than the late Lance Corporal Richard A. Buerstetta, United States Marine Corps, who was killed during combat operations on October 22, 2006, while serving in Al Anbar Province, Iraq; and

WHEREAS, after witnessing the tragic events of September 11, 2001, Richard decided to fulfill a lifetime dream by joining the United States Marine Corps (USMC) so that he might better serve his country; and

WHEREAS, Lance Corporal Buerstetta followed the patriotic tradition for which Williamson County and the Volunteer State are renowned by serving with distinction in the Marine Force Reserve's 3rd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division; and

WHEREAS, like thousands of others of this nation's sons and daughters, Lance Corporal Buerstetta did not shrink from serving in combat, believing in the justice of the cause to protect our national security and liberty and to free the Iraqi people; and

WHEREAS, a native of Williamson County, Richard Buerstetta graduated from Franklin High School, where he had distinguished himself as an excellent all-around athlete and gifted rugby player; and

WHEREAS, after joining the Marine Corps, Richard earned the respect of his comrades through his inspired leadership as a Squad Leader in Iraq; and

WHEREAS, during times when they were not occupied with their duties in Al Anbar Province, Lance Corporal Buerstetta and his fellow Marines built a gymnasium; after his untimely death, his unit named the gymnasium in Lance Corporal Buerstetta's honor; and

WHEREAS, this courageous Marine will be fondly remembered as "one of the finest young men this nation has ever produced" and a "Marine's Marine" by his comrades and superior officers, his friends and neighbors, and his devoted family: parents, Paul and Madeline Buerstetta; sister, Avrill Buerstetta; brother Thomas Buerstetta; grandmother, Eleanor Britt; step grandfather, William Britt; and fiancée, Jennifer Hilber; and

WHEREAS, Lance Corporal Richard A. Buerstetta served with great courage and gallantry, giving his life for his country and for the cause in which he believed, and for that ultimate sacrifice, he deserves proper recognition; as a member of the United States Marine Corps, he proudly continued an essential tradition of American society: the concept of the citizen-soldier; and

WHEREAS, Lance Corporal Buerstetta's dedication to excellence in the military and his love of his family, his fellow Marines and his country, exemplified in his sacrifice of life itself in defense of all that he held dear, stand as enduring examples of all the characteristics that have ensured the continued freedom of our nation and the preservation of its ideals over the course of our history; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly wishes to name a certain bridge near his parent's home in western Williamson County to permanently commemorate the singular patriotism, courage, and commitment to duty of the late Lance Corporal Richard A. Buerstetta, United States Marine Corps; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the bridge spanning State Route 96 on State Route 100 at log mile 6.67 in the City of Fairview, Williamson County is

hereby designated the "Lance Corporal Richard A. Buerstetta Memorial Bridge" in recognition of the life of valor and death in combat of Lance Corporal Richard A. Buerstetta, United States Marine Corps.

SECTION 2. The Department of Transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating the bridge described in Section 1 as the "Lance Corporal Richard A. Buerstetta Memorial Bridge". The cost of such signage shall be funded in accordance with Tennessee Code Annotated, § 54-1-133.

SECTION 3. The erection of such signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.

SECTION 4. This act shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the Commissioner of Transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 5. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.